

# Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29, 2014

---

## **Thursday, May 29, 2014**

The 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly began on Thursday, May 29, 2014 at the Country Springs Hotel Conference Center at 2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The Assembly included The Local Table, with a light meal, on Thursday afternoon.

In Thursday's worship message, Synod Bishop Jeff Barrow walked the road from El Salvador to Emmaus, professing joy at being part of a church that was finding ways to find unity of purpose with other faith traditions. Rev. Kerstin Hedlund presided; assisted by Rev. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, with Rev. Betty Baires serving as lector. Rev. Andy Fetters blessed the Good Shepherd Grant Recipients with the water of baptism.

## **Plenary I**

### **Order for Opening of Assembly**

Bishop Barrow called the Assembly to order at 7:15 pm. The bishop welcomed special guests of the Assembly: Rev. Ruben Duran, Program Director, New Congregations for the ELCA;; Rev. Larry Westfield, Regional Gift Planner – Wisconsin Area Synods, ELCA; Rev. Scott Anderson, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of Churches; Rev. Mark Lepper, Admissions Specialist, Wartburg Theological Seminary; Ms. Marilyn Olson, Assistant to the Vice President for Advancement, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Mr. Dan Schwiesow, Director – Regional Managers, Mission Investment Fund, ELCA; Ms. Brenda Skelton, President, Siebert Lutheran Foundation, and Rev. Dick and Naomi Bruesehoff, Outreach Coordinator, Portico Benefits Services.

The bishop asked Rev. Bruesehoff to address the Assembly, with Rev. Bruesehoff congratulating the synod for continuing to achieve participation by 65% of those eligible. That level of participation in Portico's wellness program translated into \$50,000 in savings on premiums this year for those covered in the synod, and with about half that amount coming back to the synod for wellness activities. Rev. Bruesehoff explained that Portico is providing an incentive for those insured to pay attention to their health, with the result that "people are getting healthier," with a "real connection in congregations." This improvement in health also translates to increased health for ministries in the synod.

Rev. Bruesehoff stated that "nobody can be healthy alone." He reported that last year, \$173 million was paid out in medical claims, with about a third paid out for just one percent of the members. While overall there is improved health, "there will be people who will become ill. Not only can't we be healthy alone, but we won't allow people to be ill alone."

He concluded by saying that there are three things that individuals can do in order to achieve a healthier community as a whole for the sake of the ministry we have together, offering to share this information with those stopping at the Portico table throughout the Assembly

Bishop Barrow concluded the introductory remarks by thanking those planning the Assembly. Planning Committee members were invited to stand.

# Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29, 2014

## **Report of the Credentials Committee**

Bishop Barrow called upon Mr. David Groenewold, chair of the Credentials Committee, to give the committee's report.

Mr. Groenewold reported that in attendance at the opening of the Assembly on Thursday, May 29, 2014, were 124 rostered persons and 155 lay people, for a total voting membership of 279. Also present were 24 visitors for a total attendance of 303. A quorum of voting members was present.

## **Adoption of Agenda**

Bishop Barrow then asked the Assembly to approve the agenda as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Synod Assembly Supplement (hereinafter "Supplement").

### **Assembly Action**

#### **SA14.05.01. Adoption of Agenda**

The Assembly voted to adopt the agenda as printed in the Supplement.

Bishop Barrow declared the agenda adopted.

## **Appointments**

Bishop Barrow referred the Assembly to the printed Supplement where members of the Credentials, Elections, Nominating, and Reference and Counsel Committees were listed. Synod Secretary Mr. Matthew Brockmeier was appointed to serve as Assembly Parliamentarian. He asked the Assembly to ratify the appointments.

### **Assembly Action**

#### **SA14.05.02. Ratification of Appointments**

The Assembly voted to ratify the appointments as printed in the Supplement.

## **Approval of Rules**

Bishop Barrow asked the Assembly to approve the proposed Rules and Procedures of the Assembly, as recommended by the Synod Council and printed in the Supplement.

### **Assembly Action**

#### **SA14.05.03. Approval of 2014 Assembly Rules and Procedures**

The Assembly voted to adopt the 2014 Assembly Rules and Procedures as presented.

The bishop declared the Rules adopted.

## **Electronic Voting Tutorial**

Ms. Tracy Apps, Synod Director of Communication, provided a brief tutorial on the synod's electronic voting system. Test votes were taken, showing that blue remained the favorite color of Voting Members, and that they were having fun (but not yet by an overwhelming margin). Travel led the list of popular activities from Ms. Apps' short list. A large majority voted yes to the question of whether they had "the hang of it."

## **Nominating Committee Report**

Bishop Barrow called on Nominating Committee Chair Ms. Debra Kohler to present the committee's report. Ms. Kohler thanked members of the committee for their service, and gave special thanks to those who have agreed to answer the call to service by standing

## Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29, 2014

as nominees. She placed in nomination those persons who had already agreed to stand for election, with Bishop Barrow calling for nominations from the floor three times for each position nominated by the committee. Eight floor nominations were made for seven positions without other nominees, with one floor nomination for a position with one nominee. The source of nominations follows the names as shown below.

### Nominated for Synod Council

At Large – Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015  
Rev. Jay McDivitt – Nominating Committee Nomination

### Nominated for the Consultation Committee

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2015  
Rev. Christian Marien – Nominating Committee Nomination

Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019  
Mr. Grant Younquist – Nominating Committee Nomination

Lay Male – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015  
Mr. Christopher Ellerd – Nominating Committee Nomination

Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015  
Ms. Susan Daniels – Floor Nomination

Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2019  
Ms. Allison Bremer – Floor Nomination

Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2015  
Rev. Sheila Rawn – Floor Nomination  
Rev. Ari Mattson – Floor Nomination

### Nominated for the Discipline Committee

Clergy – Full Terms (2) from September 2014 through August 2020  
Rev. Ed Weiskotten – Nominating Committee Nomination  
Rev. Roy Nelson – Nominating Committee Nomination

Lay Male – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020  
Mr. Robert Gee – Nominating Committee Nomination

Lay Male – Partial Term from Election through August 2016  
Mr. Jerry Key – Floor Nomination

Lay Female – Full Term from September 2014 through August 2020  
Ms. Alicia Ellis – Floor Nomination

Lay Female – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016  
Ms. Kathleen Holat – Floor Nomination

Clergy – Partial Term from Election through August 2016  
Rev. Karen Natterstad – Nominating Committee Nomination  
Rev. Grant Quever – Floor Nomination

Clergy – Partial Term from September 2014 through August 2016  
Rev. Stacy Seger

# Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29, 2014

## **Report of the Reference and Counsel Committee**

Mr. Paul Bedker, chair of the Reference and Counsel Committee, was asked to give the committee's report. The committee met on May 13<sup>th</sup> to review all properly submitted resolutions and memorials. Members of the Committee are listed in the Committee's report in the Supplement.

Mr. Bedker reported that four resolutions had been submitted and reviewed. The text of these resolutions was included in the Supplement, and will appear in these minutes as each resolution is considered.

Recommendations were as follows:

- Resolution 1 – Recommended for adoption.
- Resolution 2 – Not recommended for adoption, with comment that, while the Committee was sympathetic to the purpose of this resolution, it was agreed that the proposed actions could be counterproductive or have other unintended consequences.
- Resolution 3 – The Committee forwarded this resolution without recommendation, noting that the impact on the synod's budget means that a higher threshold for approval is required than normally true for resolutions.
- Resolution 4 – Recommended for adoption.

## **Report of Synod Council Vice President**

Vice President Mr. Scott Manske presented his work as generally being behind the scenes. He said that didn't know fully what to expect, having been a Sunday school and confirmation teacher, and taken Bible classes as part of his life in the church. He called the last year a "learning experience," but continued that he knew there were those who would support him, especially his wife.

Mr. Manske said that he set his own path, following the work of "a great vice president," Ms. Sue Cyr. He said that he created a full agenda, making sure that the Synod Council can discuss and resolve issues. He added that the Synod Council is designed in part to support synod staff, and also in part to listen to congregations. He said the Council had made progress on several issues raised by the previous Assembly. While "some members of the Council may have felt overwhelmed, others had confidence," he continued. Noting key areas for the Council's attention, he cited the Funding Task Force, the new task force to determine future funding procedures from the assets of closed congregations. The Cluster Task Force, led by Esther Rusch, and other concerns, including Palestine, a synod endowment fund, missions outside our borders, the synod leadership forum, the synod's financial status, and the process of supporting the ELCA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign. He thanked members of the Synod Council, asking those present to stand. He said "I am not alone when I am with the Synod Council, or with the synod staff."

Addressing the diversity of worship in the synod, Mr. Manske reported that he had worshiped at various congregations, large and small, with great variety in other regards. "We are not alone – Jesus has walked with a number of congregations over the years, and will continue to walk with them." He described the range of churches; some self-sufficient, some in the very poorest neighborhoods, and which are open doors to many

# Minutes of the 2014 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly May 29, 2014

tongues, including Spanish, Korean and Hmong. “Thanks to the congregations for letting me not feel alone.”

He ended his report by asking “what the synod can do for you that it is not already doing.” If you are facing struggles, he said, you are not alone, with neighboring congregations or the synod available to provide help. “I am not alone, you are not alone, we are not alone.”

## **Anniversary Recognitions**

Bishop Jeff Barrow and Vice President Manske recognized milestone anniversaries of service by rostered leaders in the synod.

### **Celebrating 25 years of service**

- Rev. Marcia Carrier (not present)

### **Celebrating 40 years of service**

- Rev. G. Thomas Osterfield (present with wife Gail)
- Rev. June Eastvold (present with husband Dr. Michael Frome)
- Rev. Ronald Bachman (not present; wife Laura accepted recognition) The bishop noted that Rev. Bachman is in hospital, remaining beloved in the heart of his congregation, offering a prayer for him.
- Rev. Ronald C. Matter (present with wife Margaret Mary)
- Rev. Stephen Engelstad (present with wife Gayle)

### **Celebrating 50 years of service**

- Rev. Joseph Lewandowski (not present)
- Rev. Lawrence C. Sandin (not present)
- Rev. Carl L. Johnson (present with wife Donna)
- Rev. Francis Odden (present with wife Miriam)
- Rev. Gerald V. Goodrich (present, with fondness for late wife June)
- Rev. Robert R. Scheuermann (present with wife Rev. Barbara Rasmussen)
- Rev. Theodore H.(Ted) Romberg (present; wife Sharon is in hospital; prayer by Bishop Barrow for her)

### **Celebrating 60 years of service**

- Rev. John H. Schumell (not present)
- Rev. Harvey M. Berg (present with wife Shirley)

The recognition of service ended with a prayer by Bishop Barrow.

Following announcements, the Assembly recessed for the evening at 8.55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Brockmeier  
Secretary  
Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA